

## Feed Your Head by MiinAandeg

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**Summary:**

Will tries to hold it together. Lucas notices.

## Feed Your Head

### Author's Note:

This show owns my ass. God damn. Title from White Rabbit by Jefferson Airplane, a song first introduced to me in a SPN episode. Glad to see it being used in another show :)

Comments are loved.

Will sleeps with the lights on. They're the Christmas lights his mom bought, strung back and forth across his ceiling in a patchwork pattern. The colorful glow is so different from the Upside Down universe that it keeps his heart from racing and keeps him from being trapped in his nightmares when he wakes up. His room, and its soft glow, becomes a safe haven.

At school, the harsh, fluorescent lights are so bright they're almost fake. He feels disconnected from everything happening around him, like it's all a dream and eventually he'll wake back up to the Demogorgon's approaching scream. But he doesn't tell anyone. Dustin is so happy he's back, he doesn't want to ruin it, and sometimes he catches Mike looking to the corner of the room for Eleven, and he doesn't want to make that even worse. Lucas though...sometimes Will notices Lucas staring at him with a weird, uncomfortable expression on his face. Will isn't even sure where to begin addressing that issue.

Home is almost worse. His friends expect him to be okay. His mom and Johnathan expect him to be completely broken and smother him in affection, constantly asking if he needs anything. It's harder to find the right response to get them to leave him alone. He's never been that great at lying, but now, all he *does* is lie.

The only time he doesn't is when he's in his room, bathed in the soft glow. There's no reason to lie to himself. There's no one to force him into a tight hug if he cries, no one to recoil when they realize he *isn't*

okay, no one to scare when he coughs up an interdimensional slug and crushes it between his hands. He can hold it all inside and maybe that stops it from being real. Even if it doesn't, at least he can spare them the worry for just a little longer.

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Lucas gives him a weird look when he comes back to class from the bathroom. His frequent escapes to cough up slugs don't go unnoticed, but mostly everyone assumes he just has to pee a lot. The look Lucas gives him as he sits down makes him wonder how long he can go without someone asking. He avoids Lucas' look and looks up at the board where Mrs. Zimmerman is walking through FOIL for the fifteenth time that semester (the third since Will had gotten back).

His vision blurs and the classroom darkens, vines twisting over his desk and twining together in a web over the cracked and chipped chalkboard. Will white knuckles his desk. The vines, wet and spongy, squish under his grip, spilling foul smelling liquid over his fingers. He clenches his jaw and swallows the scream that claws at his throat. The world flashes back to normal.

Mike taps his pencil on his desk in boredom. Dustin doodles something Will can't make out, and when Will looks to his left, Lucas is staring right at him. Lucas looks away, tearing a piece of paper out of his notebook and writing out a message before sneaking it on to Will's desk when Mrs. Zimmerman's back is turned.

*What's your problem? –Lucas*

Will crumples the note up and throws it in the trash on his way out.

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“Will!” Joyce knocks on his door. “Lucas is here!”

Will hits the light switch for the Christmas lights and opens his bedroom door. Joyce smiles and hugs him. Will grits his teeth and wills his heartbeat to calm down.

“I’m so happy to see you hanging out with them,” she says as she releases him. “Just be careful. No wandering through the woods.”

“I’ve done enough of that,” Will says.

He grabs his jacket and heads outside as he pulls it on. Lucas leans on the handlebars of his bike, a stubborn look on his face.

“What?” Will asks, for once not bothering to mask the irritation in his voice.

“You don’t want to worry anyone. I get that,” Lucas says. “But c’mon man. It’s me.”

Will scrunches his nose up as he walks closer. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“I’m not Mike. You’re not in love with me-“

“I’m not-“

Lucas silences Will with a raised eyebrow. “And I’m not Dustin so you don’t have to worry about me trying to fix things. So. Tell me what’s wrong.”

Will huffs and grabs his bike. “I’m not in love with Mike.”

“Whatever, man. Lead the way.”

Will bikes back towards their school. The school was far away from the woods, which made it a nicer place to be as long as he didn’t go inside. He tucks his bike up on the bike rack and watches Lucas to the same. Will sits on the steps leading into the gym. Lucas looks at him with a weird expression before sitting down next to him, hands shoved in his pockets.

“Why here?” Lucas asks when Will doesn’t say anything.

“All of our houses are by the woods. This isn’t,” Will says. “I hate the woods.”

“Because of the Upside Down,” Lucas says.

Will looks at him as he folds his hands in his lap. “Yeah. I spent most of my time running from it in my house or the woods and I...” He shakes his head, shoulders hunching as his throat burns.

“My dad has nightmares a lot, from Vietnam,” Lucas says, slinging an arm around Will’s shoulders. “The fireworks freak him out too. It’s like that, right?”

“Yeah, I guess,” Will says around a shaky breath. “But sometimes it’s more. I...” The words stick in his throat as his nails bite into his palms. “Sometimes, when I’m awake, I don’t see this world, I see the Upside Down and it’s not...it’s not my imagination, it’s real and-“

His voice cracks, heart racing now that the words were out. He can’t bottle them back up now that they exist and have been heard. Will chokes on a sob and crumples forward to hide his face in his hands as he starts to cry, deep heaving breaths forcing out wounded noises. Lucas swears under his breath and hauls Will towards him. Will goes, wrapping his arms around Lucas and clinging to him as he cries, almost like if he doesn’t let go then nothing can drag him back into the Upside Down.

Eventually, the tears begin to dry. His heart still pounds, the speed of it making his stomach churn, but he feels a little better, even with snot drying on his face. He wipes his face on his sleeve and offers Lucas something close to a smile. Lucas still looks worried, but he smiles back.

“So like, you think you’re still connected? To the Upside Down?” Lucas asks.

Will releases him, knuckles cracking as he does so. “Uhm...yeah. I think so.”

Lucas looks out across the parking lot. “Well...shit.”

"I don't...I don't want anyone else to know," Will says in a rush.

"Are you crazy?" Lucas asks, eyebrows raising. "Even if we *don't* tell your mom, we *have* to tell Mike."

"No!" Will gets to his feet, too anxious to sit still. "It's not...that bad."

Somehow, Lucas' eyebrows get higher.

"Well, it's *bad*, but I can handle it," Will says. "Mike has enough on his plate and everyone's happy, and I already ruined it for you so—"

Lucas gets to his feet and grabs Will's shoulders, holding him still so they're looking each other in the eye. "You haven't ruined anything. I asked because I wanted to know, and even though Mike hasn't noticed, I *know* Dustin has, he's just too nice to push you on it."

Will lets out a deep breath. "I just don't want to worry everyone again."

"It can stay between us," Lucas says, hands falling to his sides. "For now. But if it gets worse, and don't try to hide it because you know I'll know, we're telling someone."

"Okay," Will says, and he feels better immediately because it isn't up to him. He and Lucas have a deal. All he's got to do is obey what he agreed to.

"Cool." Lucas heads back towards their bikes. "I told my parents I'm staying the night at yours by the way."

The smile on Will's face feels a little more real.

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Will wakes up muffling his scream into his arm. It's a habit. Hiding from the Demogorgon required silence above all else, but he isn't quiet enough to not wake Lucas. Or maybe the light was too much for

him to fall asleep in the first place. Either way, the end result is Lucas' hand squeezing the back of his neck as Will stares at the lights and hums under his breath.

"You okay?" Lucas whispers.

"Yeah I'll be fine. Go to sleep," Will says.

Lucas lets go and wiggles back under the covers. Will slips out of the bed and darts across the hall to the bathroom just in time to start coughing deep, full-body heaves that wrack his body. The slug plops on the ground and Will stomps on it. It splatters green and black goo on the ground but he ignores it in favor of spitting out the tasteless slime it left behind out in the sink.

"Dude, gross," Lucas says.

Will turns around. "I..."

"It's fine," Lucas says. "Has this been happening since you got back?"

"Yeah..." Will says, grabbing some toilet paper and wiping his foot clean.

"Well I guess that confirms it's not in your head, huh?" Lucas asks.

Will wipes up the mess on the floor before wrapping the gross toilet paper up in some clean tissue and tossing it in the trash. "Yeah..." His shoulders tremble but he takes a deep breath, determined not to cry again. "None of it's just in my head."

"I told you I got it right in its mouth hole with my slingshot, right?" Lucas asks.

"Only a million times," Will says as he turns to look at him again.

"So don't worry about anything. I'll protect you this time," Lucas says, grabbing Will's arm and tugging him back towards his room.

"I tried to shoot it," Will says. "I didn't just let it take me."

"Obviously," Lucas says. He lets go of Will so he can climb into bed.

Will sighs and crawls in after him, curling on his side facing Lucas.  
“Thanks.”

Lucas smiles at him. “Of course.”

Will’s vision darkens, the lights flashing away so he’s lying on a torn mattress, surrounded by vine covered walls. Lucas is nowhere to be seen.

“Lucas?”

“I’m right here. I can see you but you look spaced out. Where are you?” Lucas asks, his voice an echo in Will’s mind.

“The Upside Down.” Will squeezes his eyes shut tight, but they fly open again when a hand slides into his. He’s still trapped in the darkness but he can feel Lucas’ hand like he’s there. He clenches his hand around Lucas’. “Don’t let go. Don’t let me get trapped.”

“I’ve got you,” Lucas says. “You’re not going anywhere.”

Will holds on.